Final Report to
The Australian Universities Quality Agency on
Actions taken to Address the Outcomes of the University’s Cycle 1 Audit
26 March 2010
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The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) undertook an audit of the University of Western Sydney (UWS) in October 2006. The public report on the UWS quality audit was released in February 2007.

The UWS audit report contained eight areas for commendation, nine affirmations and eight recommendations. These audit outcomes have been incorporated into the University’s consolidated strategic action plan – *Making the Difference* – which was first approved by the UWS Board of Trustees in December 2006, and revised in 2009.

The Report that follows identifies the actions taken to address each of the UWS AUQA audit affirmations and recommendations, along with evidence concerning the quality of current implementation and performance. It builds on the interim progress report forwarded to AUQA in June 2008.

The process used to respond to the audit report has a number of key features, all of which align with findings on effective change management in higher education. They include:

- The use of the UWS project methodology to ensure that each development has a clear implementation plan;
- Use of targeted benchmarking with like institutions where solutions to the identified improvement area are working well;
- Taking into account changes in the higher education operating environment over the past 18 months.

The cycle 1 audit has produced positive and enduring outcomes for UWS:

- It identified a productive and efficient methodology for engaging staff in whole-of-institution change and ensuring that planned change is implemented consistently, effectively and is sustained;
- It has made the key purposes and the ways in which UWS operates more explicit;
- It has contributed positively to morale;
- The key areas of UWS practice that are on the AUQA good practice database have been the subject of considerable national and international interest and have been one mechanism through which the University has developed its focused benchmarking agenda and seen its reputation enhanced;
- There are a number of key cultural developments, which have now become more embedded in daily practice across the University. These include taking an explicitly evidence-based and outcomes-focused approach to decision-making, giving more direct attention to assuring consistency in quality across campuses and the collaborative use of the Plan-Implement-Review-Improve (PIRI) cycle as a part of normal business;
- It has sharpened considerably the University’s approach to planning, with a distinct shift towards setting directions and, through a process of ‘steered engagement’, enabling locally relevant and feasible ways of implementing these directions, monitoring progress and enhancing strategies on the basis of feedback and outcomes;
- The recommendation that the University identify the desired distinguishing characteristics of the UWS learning experience has enabled it to articulate better its objectives, strategies and aspirations for the student experience.

We look forward very much to our Cycle 2 audit, and to working with the audit panel to review the themes we agree need to be addressed as the University continues its strategic development and further establishes its reputation within the sector.

Janice Reid
Vice Chancellor
Affirmation 1:

AUQA affirms UWS’ efforts to develop an integrated framework for coordinating and streamlining all levels of university planning, and facilitating performance against plans.

Actions taken

The Revised UWS Planning Framework

The UWS planning framework continues to follow the Plan-Implement-Review-Improve (PIRI) cycle endorsed in the Cycle 1 AUQA audit. However, how this operates has been completely reviewed and a more integrated, efficient and IT-enabled model has now been implemented successfully. A steered engagement approach, consistent with research on effective change in higher education, has been adopted.

Under this approach the overall strategic directions of the University are set, along with aligned KPIs and targets and then local academic and professional units develop linked action plans to implement them. The approach is distinctive because it is IT-enabled and integrates strategic positioning, planning, resourcing, review, monitoring and improvement (See: Making the Difference 2010-15).

It is important to note that UWS has given specific attention to aligning its budget strategy (UWS 2010 Budget & 2011-12 Forward Estimates) and its Our People 2015 strategies to the key strategic objectives identified in University's Strategic Plan: Making the Difference 2010-15 (MTD). For example, the University’s budget process has directly allocated more than $30m in the current budget to key strategic priorities in the Plan. In addition, 2% of the College allocations are tied directly to addressing the UWS Learning & Teaching Priorities in the MTD plan and associated KPIs. Similarly research incentive funding is allocated to key UWS research concentrations and emerging strengths.

Further streamlining is being achieved through the consolidation of the University’s different databases into an integrated Business Intelligence System. This is building on the Cognos-enabled Tracking and Improvement System for Learning & Teaching (TILT) system which received a commendation in the Cycle 1 AUQA audit. The intention is to link the UWS Business Intelligence (BI) system directly to the Online MTD. In this way there will be an immediate electronic link between planning, performance and reporting.

Making the Difference 2010-15

Using this system the UWS Making the Difference 2006-9 (MTD) strategy was developed and endorsed by the Board of Trustees in December 2006. It has been tracked, reviewed and reshaped into the UWS Making the Difference 2010-15 strategy, with the endorsement of the Board of Trustees in December 2009. The foundations for the new approach were set by a pro bono project undertaken by Bain and Co., a leading global business and strategy consulting firm.

As part of the streamlining process the University has established five KPI areas, all of which align not only with the mission, key strategic directions and positioning objectives for the University but the emerging Government agenda post-Bradley and broader, rapid changes internationally. College strategies address each KPI in locally appropriate ways.

Coordination, Monitoring and Accountability

In terms of coordination the University established a Strategy & Quality Committee (SQC) in 2007, chaired by the DVC (Corporate Services) and comprised of those senior officers with University-wide portfolios, including the Pro Vice-Chancellors Research, Learning and Teaching, Engagement, Campus Development and Quality, and the Dean of Indigenous Education. The SQC monitors the implementation of the MTD and the links between this and the University’s cyclical review process, AUQA audit priorities, Compacts’ negotiations and other key external requirements. (See: SQC TORs).

In terms of accountability the agreed MTD priorities, KPIs and targets are a focus of the annual performance and review plans of the DVCs, PVCs, Executive Deans, Senior Directors and Heads of School. They are also given specific focus in the UWS system of cyclical reviews (See: Reviews Policy).

Implementation of the Plan is tracked by the Office of Planning and Quality with performance reported regularly to the SQC, the UWS Executive and the Board of Trustees along with the University’s Audit and Risk Management and Strategy and Resources Committees.
Current outcomes and impact

MTD Online
The development of a more integrated approach to planning and monitoring across the core and enabling areas of the University is seen in the UWS MTD Online. This electronic ‘plan on a page’ ensures all concerned can quickly see the high level strategies being pursued by the University, how they relate to each other and then their associated KPIs and 2015 targets.

From the same page, users are then able to click on a particular strategic action or KPI to see how these are being implemented in appropriate and responsive ways at the local level. For example, by clicking on any one of the five KPIs now set in this new, more streamlined approach, the user can see the targets for achieving each KPI to 2015 across the University’s three Colleges. Similarly by clicking on any one of the strategies (‘what we will do’) the user can see how these are being implemented locally. At the higher levels of the integrated plan users can click on the vision, “What we are” themes and “What we believe in” themes for greater detail. Once the UWS BI system is linked in, users will also be able to link directly to the actual performance outcomes for each College and Division in each KPI area.

The MTD plan and its distinctive, integrated, online access system have been endorsed by the UWS Board of Trustees.

Current Performance against the plan
Current levels of performance against the University’s KPIs indicate that the new integrated and more streamlined approach to planning, review and improvement and the agreed areas to which it is giving focus are proving to be productive:

- Commencing bachelor student retention in 2008-9 was 81.5%. On the latest sector data UWS was 21st on this measure up from 24th in the sector in 2005-6.
- The percentage of domestic students that were low SES in 2009 was 22.1%. On the latest sector data UWS is 10th on this measure, up from 13th in the sector in 2007.
- The ratio of low SES student retention to non low SES student retention in 2008-9 was 1.03. The latest sector average (2007-8) is 0.97.
- The number of Indigenous students (headcount) has grown from 253 in 2006 to 331 in 2009, a 30% increase in three years.
- Total research income increased from $14,232,000 in 2006 to $19,325,000 in 2008. In terms of ARC grants awarded between 2006 and 2008 UWS moved from 20th to 19th position in the sector. A significant increase in NHMRC income is expected as the UWS Medical School becomes fully established.

In addition:

- The UWS market share of first preferences in NSW/ACT has risen from 12.8% in 2006 to 13.7% in 2010.
- Student satisfaction results have improved significantly. Overall explicit satisfaction on the CEQ for UWS has risen from 55.4% in 2004 to 69.2% in 2009. On the UWS Student Feedback on Units Survey overall satisfaction has risen from 69.5% in 2005 to 75.7% in 2009. On the UWS Student Satisfaction Survey, which taps the total student experience, it has risen from 63% in 2004 to 76% in 2009.
- In terms of the MTD focus on building financial sustainability the UWS consolidated surplus has grown from $29.58m in 2007 to $60.83m in 2009.

Importantly the MTD plan for 2010-5 continues to give direct attention to the key recommendations and affirmations emerging from the UWS Cycle 1 audit. These include giving focus to:

- the definition of the distinguishing characteristics of the UWS student experience (for UWS the combination of enabling students to study in their own time; a focus on support for transition and success, especially for low SES and Indigenous students, embedding engaged learning in every program, enhanced learning pathways and assuring the quality and standards of assessment and feedback). (See: MTD plan).
- Continued research concentration, quality, partnerships and provision of a rich and stimulating environment for research students (See: MTD plan).
- Building organisational and financial strength including a focus on further development of staff capability, recruitment and succession planning. (See: Our people 2015).
GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT & RESOURCING

Affirmation 2:

AUQA affirms the various measures UWS is exploring to support its self-sufficiency agenda.

Actions taken

Consistent with this Affirmation, the MTD 2010-15 plan identifies building self-sufficiency through organisational and financial strength as being a key component of the overall UWS strategy. The key change from the 2006 strategy to the 2010 plan is moving the focus from financial ‘sustainability’ to ‘organisational and financial strength’.

Key operational aspects of this Strategy include to:

• Attract, retain, recognise, reward and develop high quality staff. (See: Our People 2015).
• Implement 5-year financial and capital plans and a rolling 3-year budget framework;
• Ensure sustainability in the University’s academic program and operations (See: current priorities - student retention);
• Build robust international enrolments;
• Leverage land-holdings to increase income;
• Create commercially astute and profitable University businesses;
• Build productive relationships with alumni and potential university sponsors.

Areas of focus in the overall financial strategy are:

1. increasing revenue;
2. releasing resources for strategic development initiatives; and
3. continuing to contain costs.

Action has included a comprehensive review and reshaping of the UWS Financial Model in 2008-9; the introduction of a new three year rolling budget framework and capital plan; a restructure of the Office of Development to give a more pan-university focus; a review and updating of alumni records to help identify potential sponsors; the development of a Campus Development Plan; the introduction of specific targets for international onshore student load increases as a KPI; and a review of each of the University’s entities.

Current outcomes and impact

The current quality of implementation of this strategy is seen in positive outcomes on all of the following measures.

• General financial outcomes: The University has gone from an operating surplus of $29.58m in 2007 to $60.83m in 2009.
• Sustainability of academic programs and operations: In 2010 it is expected that UWS will achieve its target of 10% over-enrolment, with a significant increase in first preference applications and improved retention.
• CGS/HECS Revenue: This has increased from $260m in 2006 to a projected $337m in 2010.
• Overseas student load & income: International onshore student load has grown from 2434 in 2006 to 2673 in 2009 (prel.) with a projected growth from 2873 in 2010 to 4402 in 2015. This represents an increase in income from $37m in 2006 to a budgeted amount for 2010 of $58m.
• Infrastructure, sustainability and self-sufficiency: The University has obtained a number of grants to fund strategic developments including: In 2008 a grant of $6.728m from the Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund; in 2009 a grant of $40m for its Climate Change and Energy Research Facility from the Education Investment Fund; and $17.6m from the 2009 Federal Budget’s Health Portfolio Projects.
• Funding opportunities arising from UWS Land holdings: UWS has advanced plans for the sale or development of land projected to achieve $35m income for UWS at Westmead; $40m at Campbelltown; and $13.8m at Penrith.
• Profitable University Businesses: The University has five wholly-owned and two partially owned entities – UWS Conference and Residential Colleges Ltd; UWS College Pty Ltd; UWS Foundation Ltd; Whitlam Institute Ltd; UWS Connect Ltd; CADRE Pty Ltd; and Television Sydney Ltd. As at 2010 the UWS share of these entities amounted to $32m in accumulated funds. An annual operating surplus of $2.6m was achieved in 2009 (up from $1.4m in 2008). Significant growth in UWS Residential College accommodation, in UWS College enrolments, and in UWS Connect services is projected.
• **Income held in the UWS Foundation Trust:** Funds in the Trust have grown from $3m in 2006 to $25m at the start of 2010.

• **Institutional Performance Assessment:** The most recent Institutional Performance Portfolio report for UWS published in February 2010 (reviewing the 2008 outcomes) states:
  
  “The university’s financial position is good”, with strengths listed as a “good net asset base of $859.2 million, nil borrowings, low debt-equity ratio of 0.3, strong revenue growth of 11.2%”. The only possible area of concern is high reliance on Australian Government funding, but it concludes “it does not raise particular concern”.

  The report reveals the UWS operating margin was 7.2 which compared very favourably to the sector average of 1.8. (See [Institution Performance Portfolio 2009](#))

For full details of performance trends on each of the above indicators see the financial outcomes in the latest [UWS Annual Report](#).
Recommendation 1:

AUQA recommends that UWS extend its benchmarking to a national and international peer group chosen in the light of its proposed learning and teaching profile.

Actions taken

UWS Characteristics Relevant to Benchmarking

As the MTD plan 2010-15 makes clear UWS is giving focus to an integrated set of desired distinguishing characteristics of the UWS student experience which involves the combination of enabling students to study in their own time; a focus on support for transition and success, especially for low SES and Indigenous students, embedding engaged learning in every program, enhanced learning pathways and assuring consistent quality and standards of assessment and feedback. It is also giving increased focus to issues of social, economic and environmental sustainability in a rapidly developing peri-urban area, along with embedding sustainability in all of its services, activities and operations, including in the curriculum. It faces the particular challenge of being a multicampus university with its load spread comparatively evenly across 5 major campuses.

UWS-Griffith Benchmarking Partnership

In actioning the AUQA benchmarking recommendation, as noted in its interim report on Cycle 1 progress, UWS has selected Griffith University as a key benchmarking partner in Australia as it is also multicampus, has a similar operating context, a high proportion of low SES enrolments, a strong track record in sustainability activities, a commitment to Indigenous education and, as seen in its selected cycle 2 audit theme, a focus on supporting student success. This work builds on UWS’ earlier benchmarking of quality management and tracking processes with Monash University’s Centre for Higher Education Quality.

UWS-Charles Darwin Linkages

In terms of Indigenous education UWS also has also chosen to develop a detailed benchmarking relationship with Charles Darwin University which has resulted in a jointly supported grant of $5.7m from the Diversity and Structural Adjustment fund project focused on flexible provision and access, especially for Indigenous, low SES and NESB students.

Involvement in key National Initiatives and Networks

UWS is now well positioned and linked into national policy formation and leadership networks which assist benchmarking through its active involvement in the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance – (AUCEA); its membership of the DEEWR Indicators Development Group; the DEEWR Academic Workforce Renewal Advisory Committee; the Commonwealth Green Skills Implementation Group; and the TEQSA Expert Advisory Group.

Targeted international linkages

UWS is a member of the Canadian Quality Network of Universities and the US Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. In terms of IT-enabled learning it is active in Educause having led its National Leadership for Change Project in 2008.

Each of these linkages focuses directly on key aspects of the UWS strategy – including Indigenous education, blended and ICT-enabled learning, university engagement and sustainability.

Current outcomes and impact

In terms of National Benchmarking

Extensive Griffith University Benchmarking

A series UWS-Griffith “benchmarking for improvement” projects have been successfully completed since 2007. These include: sharing successful strategies for optimising first year transition and retention, joint survey use and item validation, online learning, enhanced approaches to student administration and the development of a joint national moderation and standards project. Details of these projects and their outcomes are available by clicking on the weblink: UWS-Griffith Benchmarking projects. All of these joint benchmarking initiatives focus directly on the participation, support and learning priorities identified in the UWS MTD plan. The former DVC (Academic) from Griffith, and now Provost of the University of Melbourne, was the project leader for Griffith and can comment on the benefit and impact at Griffith and UWS as a partner in this process.

La Trobe University Benchmarking

A parallel relationship has been developed with another multicampus university - La Trobe University in Melbourne - where targeted benchmarking has focused on leadership succession, first year transition and retention and sustainability.

Academic Standards Benchmarking

UWS is currently leading a national pilot of an academic standards moderation project in partnership with Griffith, La Trobe, Charles Darwin and Macquarie universities (See: standards moderation project outline).
Indigenous Graduate Attribute Benchmarking

Since 2008 the University has benchmarked approaches being used to introduce an Indigenous graduate attribute with 11 Australian Universities (JCU, Griffith, CDU, University of South Australia, Curtin, ECU, Newcastle, CSU, Deakin, Melbourne and Curtin). The introduction of a UWS Indigenous Graduate Attribute based on this benchmarking was approved in 2009. The response to Recommendation 5 (below) gives further details on other initiatives in the Indigenous education area.

In terms of International Benchmarking

- The Dean of Indigenous studies visited, studied and adapted the practices for Indigenous student engagement and support being used at the University of Manitoba in 2007.
- The UWS Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education’s membership of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) has been used to benchmark its Indigenous knowledge curriculum with Canadian Indian Colleges.
- UWS has developed an integrated approach to sustainability based on its benchmarking with AASHE. In March 2010 the UWS framework for sustainability was showcased at the Green Universities Conference and at the Universities Australia Conference.
- The leaders of the University of British Columbia’s and Harvard’s sustainability programs visited UWS in 2009 to advise on our strategy. As a result of this work UWS is implementing a Green Rolling Fund in 2010.
- The University’s membership of the Talloires network, along with its leadership in the 32 member AUCEA and the development of a Tracking and Improvement System for Community Engagement (TICE) has enabled it to benchmark and enhance its approach to engaged learning. UWS was selected as a ‘good practice’ case study for its approach in an international comparative Talloires project led by Sir David Watson in 2008-9 (See: A University without walls).
- UWS has been invited to join as an auditor in Quality Audits in South Africa and Oman. This has enabled UWS to benchmark its approaches to participation, transition and retention for under-represented groups with the overseas institutions audited.

Contribution to UWS performance

Evidence that this benchmarking work has contributed positively to UWS performance can be seen in the fact that overall satisfaction on the CEQ has increased by approximately 14% since 2004 and retention by more than 4%. Student and staff satisfaction in all the areas benchmarked nationally or internationally has also risen. For trend data on these measures see Surveys at UWS, including the results on the UWS Student Satisfaction Survey 2010 and the UWS Staff Services Survey 2009.

The UWS desk-audit against the National Protocols identifies a wide range of other external benchmarks.
Affirmation 3:
AUQA affirms the Academic Senate’s decision to review the assessment practices as a priority for 2007.

Actions taken

As noted in the UWS interim progress report in June 2008 this affirmation was actioned and the UWS Assessment Policy was completely revised during 2007, using benchmarking with targeted university partners, including Griffith University. A detailed local staff engagement strategy using the University’s Heads of Program Network (which attracted a commendation in the AUQA cycle 1 audit) and a training program using the new UWS Assessment Guide for staff have been used to support systematic implementation.

During 2008 and 2009 UWS has implemented a new Student Learning Guide system which gives explicit focus to assessment in each unit of study and ensures all staff comply with the new UWS assessment practices. In 2008 the University appointed Teaching Fellows with a key accountability to support implementation of the new Assessment Policy and Guidelines.

Current outcomes and impact

Compliance with and implementation of the new policy was staged over 2008 and 2009, with Level 100 and 400 units being revised in the first year. By the end of 2009 all units at every level had complied with the new requirements.

Evidence of compliance is to be found in the new UWS Learning Guides (See: Unit Outline and Learning Guides Policy) which were implemented in tandem with the new assessment policy. These electronically available guides are mandatory for each unit of study and must, as noted above, explicitly comply with the assessment policy.

As a consequence, the mean performance ratings in the UWS Student Satisfaction Survey on the assessment focused items has increased significantly since 2004-5. Specifically, the mean performance rating on:

- item 12: My course provides clear assessment requirements has risen from 3.38 in 2004-5 to 3.67 in 2009-10;
- item 13: My course provides relevant assessment tasks has risen from 3.52 in 2004-5 to 3.74 in 2009-10;
- item 14: My course provides timely and constructive feedback on learning has risen from 3.01 to 3.29.

This focus has been benchmarked successfully with and endorsed by Griffith University.

Next steps

In 2010, under the direction of its Pro Vice-Chancellors Quality and Learning and Teaching, UWS is leading a national pilot project aimed at identifying a feasible way to moderate the validity and reliability of assessment in specific Fields of Education. At the time of writing the pilot in the area of Accounting is underway. UWS is funding the coordination role for the project and Macquarie University the workshop on the pilot results (See: National Standards Moderation project).

A major focus in 2010 is the further enhancement of the quality of assessment feedback. As our CEQuery analyses of data from 14 universities indicates this is a challenge common to all universities studied.
Actions taken

As the UWS Making the Difference 2010-15 plan indicates the University has responded to this affirmation by including: “Enable students to study in their own time, supported by ICT-enabled learning resources” as the first focus in its strategy of creating a superior and engaged learning experience. (See: Engaged Learning; MTD)

System upgrades

UWS upgraded its WebCT online learning management system (LMS) to Blackboard Campus Edition 6 in 2007 and to Campus Edition 8 in 2008. The LMS was renamed vUWS (virtual UWS).

During 2008 and 2009 UWS Lectures Online (See: Lectures Online) was introduced with Lectopia (Echo 360) technology installed in 47 lecture theatres.

Staff support

To ensure vUWS use by all academic staff is effective, a systematic staff skills' development program has been undertaken since 2008 focusing on ‘just-in-time’ teaching development for academic staff, with regular workshops provided in a fully online or blended mode to optimise accessibility for staff located across the multiple campuses of UWS. The workshops support staff to extend and diversify the ways they use e-learning in their taught units. More recent workshops have focused on areas such as the effective uses of podcasting, Lectures Online, and implementing the Basic Standards for E-Learning Sites. A new online module provides academic staff with an introduction to blended learning. Within six months of its release, 154 staff across the three Colleges have used this module in 331 user sessions.

The booklet Basic Standards for E-Learning Sites (See: vUWS Quality Standards) provides staff with tools and tips for self review to ensure consistency with the following four standards:

1. organisation and appearance;
2. consistency and compliance;
3. appropriate use of tools;
4. learner resources and supports.

All UWS staff and students have access on virtual UWS to e-learning tool kits that provide information and resources on effective online learning and outline the features of the different tools which UWS uses.

The College of Arts has seconded staff with high rating sites to coach others. The LMS team provides exemplars of high rating sites in different fields of education.

Benchmarking

Targeted benchmarking on LMS sites with multicampus universities such as Griffith University began in 2008 and continued through 2009. It resulted in a range of quality enhancements. The project team developed a framework that provided regular, ongoing ‘snapshots’ of LMS usage.

Funding and targets

The UWS Learning and Teaching Action Plan has funded a number of e-learning projects to improve quality in e-learning and innovative uses of technology to support learning.

The University aims to increase further the use of online learning for all units of study from the present rate of 99% to 100%.

Quality Management

The UWS E-Learning Quality Framework was developed and is being implemented across all UWS Schools. This framework enables staff to evaluate each of their vUWS sites against a benchmarked set of good practice standards and, through this process, to enhance their skills in both the technical and pedagogical aspects of online learning.

Oversight

Oversight is being given by two new UWS committees established in 2008 and 2009:

- vUWS Advisory Group – This group addresses operational and quality aspects of the Blackboard system, e.g risk management, quality standards, proposals for enhancements;
- The Learning Spaces and Technologies Committee – This is high level strategic group that integrates the planning of technologies, including vUWS, with the development of our campuses.

Affirmation 4:

AUQA affirms that UWS continue to develop the use of WebCT in all programs and work to ensure its use by all academic staff.
Current outcomes and impact

Utility
Blackboard Campus Edition 8 has proven to be a robust and reliable learning management system, with the capability to deliver linked e-learning technologies such as streamed lecture recordings, wikis, interactive learning modules, voice-based discussions, blogs and other online learning tools.

Usage
UWS continues to have one of the highest participation rates in online learning in Australia. According to server statistics in 2009:

- 4,000 unique logins to vUWS daily (avg)
- 5.5 million hits to the server daily (avg)
- 113 Gb data transferred daily (avg)

In 2005, 97.8% of UWS students used e-learning growing to 100% in 2009. 99% of UWS units currently use vUWS up from 93% in 2008.

Scope
The UWS LMS team supported 1750 unit sites in 2005 and this has grown to 2251 in 2009, representing nearly 100% of units on offer. The introduction of Unit Learning Guides, which are deposited in vUWS and Lectures Online has increased the reach of the LMS to almost 100% of units. Online lectures are automatically uploaded onto the vUWS unit site within minutes of the lecture finishing. In 2009, there were 1,715 lectures recorded and loaded using this system.

Performance and user satisfaction
In the UWS Student Satisfaction Survey vUWS is consistently rated as being of very high importance and performance. For example, item 58 on the UWS Student Satisfaction survey: *WebCT (vUWS) for online learning* has attracted importance ratings over 4.6/5 since 2004, with its performance rating rising from 3.92/5 in 2004-6 to 4.16/5 in 2009-10. This places vUWS as the 2nd highest rating item on both importance and performance out of the 83 items surveyed. It is also noteworthy that the UWS Online Library, one of the largest in Australia, which is linked to all vUWS units attracts equally high importance and performance ratings (e.g. in the 2009-10 Student Satisfaction Survey item 57: *Electronic access to library resources* attracted an importance rating of 4.69/5 and a performance rating of 4.08/5).

Staff also give vUWS positive ratings. For example on the most recent UWS Staff Services Survey the vUWS system, support and training services attracted a mean importance rating of 4.57/5 and a performance rating of 3.68/5. Staff use of the UWS e-learning systems has grown from 956 academic and general staff in 2005 to 2000 staff in 2009.

Benchmarking
The outcomes of the UWS-Griffith benchmarking project in 2008-9 showed that staff and students at UWS and Griffith are using the LMS in fairly similar ways. The majority of staff use the LMS to post a wide range of lecture related material such as unit outlines, lecture notes, reading material, and web links. This provides a rich range of resources for students to access at any time and at any place during the semester. Griffith staff assessed the UWS approach as being highly developed and relevant.
**Recommendation 2:**

AUQA recommends that UWS define the desired distinguishing characteristics of the UWS student experience and develop a whole-of-institution strategy to implement and track the progress of this strategy.

**Actions taken**

As the UWS *Making the Difference* plan and Learning & Teaching Plan for 2009-11 indicate UWS has responded directly to this recommendation by defining the distinguishing characteristics of the UWS student experience as being the *combination* of enabling students to study in their own time, targeted support to achieve optimum pathways into learning, first year transition and retention, the implementation of a comprehensive Indigenous Education Strategy, embedding engaged learning in every program, and ensuring students achieve the highest possible standards. The quality of implementation for each element is tracked and improved using the UWS TILT.

The student experience is also distinguished by the context of UWS – with more than 170 countries represented in its domestic student body; a high proportion of which are first in their family to attend university and/or mature aged students; along with its location in one of the most rapidly expanding, multi-cultural peri-urban areas in Australia. This provides the University with a unique opportunity to use engaged learning to enable its graduates to work during their program on key issues of social, economic and environmental sustainability and to learn to work with diversity.

The identification of the desired characteristics and the overall strategy have been directly informed by the key findings in the research and analysis report to the 2008 Bradley Review on student satisfaction and retention in higher education.

**Current outcomes and impact**

In 2010 each College has allocated specific funding to address the key elements of the UWS Learning and Teaching Plan in ways that directly fit with their local capabilities, contexts and courses. These plans demonstrate how UWS has achieved a more integrated and responsive approach to planning.

A variety of strategies are being used by different Colleges to ensure that engaged learning is embedded in every course. For example the College of Arts is using the practicum in teaching and the Learning Through Community Service subject in other courses; The College of Health & Science is using clinical placements, work based projects and field trips. The College of Business has embedded engaged learning by introducing an engaged capstone unit in every course of study in 2008. Each of these strategies is attracting high satisfaction ratings from students. For example the capstone units in the Bachelor of Commerce and Business are consistently achieving a satisfaction rating on the UWS Student Feedback on Units Survey of 4/5.

The relevance of this approach is demonstrated by the fact that, as noted earlier in this report, overall satisfaction on the CEQ at UWS has risen by 14% since 2005-6; retention by more than 4% and by the fact that the mean rating on overall satisfaction the internally administered UWS Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) over the same period has rise from 3.34/5 to 3.98.

Significantly, not only have the performance ratings on specific aspects of the total student experience of UWS gone up over the same period on the SSS but the areas being given focus as the desired characteristics of the UWS student experience all continue to attract very high importance ratings (See: SSS 2004-9).

For example, the following items on the 2009-10 UWS Student Satisfaction Survey all attracted importance ratings of more than 4.5/5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSS Item Number</th>
<th>Aspect of the UWS Experience</th>
<th>2009-10 Mean importance rating /5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The course I am taking Closely links theory and practice</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Enables me to electronically access content if I miss class</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Promotes an ability to solve practical problems successfully</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Develops the up-to-date knowledge &amp; skills needed by employers</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Promotes skills in communicating with a diverse range of people</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Administration Online systems like MySR make administration easier</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Problems with administrative matters are effectively resolved</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Ability to learn in one's own time Electronic access to library resources</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>WebCT for online learning</td>
<td>4.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The performance ratings on all of these highly desirable aspects of the student experience at UWS on the 2009-10 student satisfaction survey are also high.
Affirmation 5:

AUQA notes the commitment of UWS to high quality research concentrations as indicated by the investment in research and affirms UWS’ development of strategies to ensure research activity is supported by appropriate workload allocations and clearly defined research foci.

Actions taken

Research concentrations
As noted in the interim progress report to AUQA in June 2008 the University has pursued a funding regime focused on selectivity and concentration in areas particularly relevant to rapidly developing peri-urban areas such as Greater Western Sydney. As also noted in that report UWS has concentrated on a centres and groups strategy, with the former being areas of existing research strength and the latter being of emerging strategic importance and under development.

The Current University Research Centres are:
- Citizenship and Public Policy
- Civionics
- Complementary Medicine
- Contemporary Muslim Societies
- Cultural Research
- Educational Research
- MARCS Auditory Laboratories
- Plants and the Environment (formerly Plant and Food Sciences)
- Urban Research

For further details please see: UWS research centres

The Current University Research Groups are:
- Disaster Response and Resilience
- Family and Community Health
- Health Outcomes and Services
- Industry and Innovation Studies
- Interpreting and Translation
- Justice Research
- Molecular Medicine
- Nanoscale
- Social and Environmental Responsibility
- Social Justice Social Change
- Solar Energy Technologies
- Writing and Society

For further details please see: UWS research groups

The University completed the Third Research Landscape review in 2008, leading to the production of the UWS Research Framework 2009-2013, which was approved at the Board of Trustees in June 2009. The 2008–9 review of research was conducted in the context of the University’s ongoing successful implementation of the 2004–2008 research strategy. In the next five years, research at UWS will have more active research groups underpinning high-performing research centres. The University is working to establish research institutes which will aggregate high performing research concentrations under a single umbrella e.g. Humanities and Social Sciences and Climate Change and Energy Research. For further details see: Research at UWS.

Workload allocations & researcher support
The current UWS Academic Staff agreement established a transparent workload framework which includes College Workload committees. In terms of research workload allocation, the clause states: “an employee’s workload agreement will include some elements of teaching and research or scholarly activity” (Section 12, pg 52 UWS Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement 2006-8). The new Academic Agreement, which is close to finalisation, includes detailed research workload provisions.

A set of workload principles, including specific reference to research workload allocation and funding, were implemented as a result of the 2006-8 Academic Agreement. A new set of principles, consistent with the 2010 Academic Agreement, will be developed.

UWS employs significant research performance drivers in its annual budget allocation, including the funding of research workloads. These include:

- Research performance incentive funding of $25.0m which is distributed to colleges on the basis of performance measures including research student completions, publications and research income. Its purpose is to fund academic staff research workloads across UWS and reflects the University’s intent to manage this large-scale internal budget resource more effectively and consistently across the Colleges/Schools. This incentive also rewards rising research performance (See: UWS Budget, 2010, p.8).
- Targeted funding support for research in 2010 which includes $7m for the UWS Research Centres; $3m for emerging research groups; $1.5m for research initiatives in the UWS Medical School; $250,000 for Indigenous Research Development; $1m in competitive internal research infrastructure funding; other internal competitive grants to $1m; $4.5m for research stipend scholarships; $300,000 for Honours Scholarships; $500,000 for library research services; with the majority of RIBG, SRE, JRE funding being allocated to Colleges.
The University has put in place a detailed support system for its researchers. For details see: UWS researchers. Enhanced workload support is seen in the RIF funding being used for the establishment in 2008 of a dedicated IT User Support Officer in support of Research Centres’ specialised hardware and software requirements.

### Current outcomes and impact

UWS maps its ABS research expenditure data returns – submitted every 2 years – to ascertain the growth in personnel time devoted to research.

In 2009, UWS research performance continued on a strong income growth trajectory.

UWS has consolidated its position in the top 20 of Australian universities in nationally competitive Australian Research Council grant success and this can be attributed to collaborative and interdisciplinary work of researchers in centres and groups and individual researchers.

In the ARC Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development awards in 2008 UWS was the most successful university in Australia, winning 3 of these awards with total funding of $390,000. In 2009 UWS success was modest in this category however in 2010 the University was awarded 3 grants in this category, with total funding of $669,750 (Research strengths).

The Trial of Excellence in Research in Australia (ERA) in 2009, confirmed UWS research intensity and quality in the Humanities and Creative Arts, with thirteen four digit fields assessable for research quality, and Cultural Studies [2002] achieving the highest ranking of 5 (outstanding performance) and Performing Arts and Creative Writing [1904] receiving a ranking of 4 (excellent performance) (See: Excellence in Research Australia at UWS)

Development of clearly defined regional research foci has led to research funding from non-Commonwealth sources such as state and local government, business, and industry (See: Research at UWS).

In the latest audited HERDC triennium, 2006-2008, over 40% of UWS academic staff were named Chief Investigators on externally funded research projects. This reflects a significant increase over the 2004–2006 triennium.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UWS</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARC Linkage Income</td>
<td>$1.2M</td>
<td>$1.8M</td>
<td>$2.3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Rank</td>
<td>21st</td>
<td>19th</td>
<td>18th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There continue to be increases in ARC Linkage income awarded and in the sectoral ranking of UWS. Industry and Other Funding also continues to rise (See: External outcomes) as does International Income linked to research activity. Much of this success is due to a range of internal support and targeted grant schemes. Many HDR students gain important experience working on linkage projects and engaging with the community.

### Next Steps

In the next phase of UWS’ growth and consolidation of research activity, the University is ensuring that research excellence extends beyond the current concentrations of research effort to all Colleges and Schools.

One of the five institutional KPIs used in the Making the Difference 2010-15 plan focuses on the quality and productivity of research. UWS aims to be positioned in the top third of Australian universities for competitive research grant income by 2015 and to continue to secure national and international recognition in specific research areas. This recognition will be achieved through strategic and targeted investment in researchers and infrastructure within a five-year framework that builds on research achievements of the past decade.

The UWS Research Framework 2009-2013 comprises strategic initiatives and improvement actions to deliver this target. Specific performance measures include competitive research grant income and a strong reputation in applied research in Greater Western Sydney and beyond.
Recommendation 3:

AUQA recommends that UWS further develop the business development office and associated University systems to promote income generation from consultancies, commercial research and other external sources.

Actions Taken

In 2007 the University reviewed the functions of the business development office and established an Innovation & Consulting Group (I&C) reporting to the DVC (Academic & Enterprise). The Director of I&C commenced work in November, 2007. The UWS I&C Group has university-wide responsibility for all consultancies, commercial research and tendering. I&C is building strong working relationships with the other units reporting to the DVC (A&E), including the UWS Office of Research, International Office, Development Office and PVC Engagement (Innovation and Consulting website).

UWS helped establish and actively participates in the network of NSW Universities Commercialisation Managers.

Intellectual Property

The Intellectual Property (IP) Policy has been reviewed, sharpened, endorsed and is being implemented (See: Intellectual Property Policy). An IP Evaluation Panel assesses all potential IP initiatives. This Panel is comprised of UWS staff, a member of the UWS Executive, external industry experts and patent attorneys.

To assist implementation, a series of IP workshops were delivered in 2009 using external patent experts supplemented by seminars facilitated by a senior technology transfer professional from Johns Hopkins University, Dr Wes Blakeslee. The IP Evaluation Panel provides a forum for academic staff and research students to develop and present a business case for their innovations and inventions, and access pre-patent funding.

Consulting and business opportunities

A University-wide review in 2009 identified the University’s capacity and capability in key areas and matched it with external business opportunities. Since the interim progress report to AUQA the UWS External Work Policy (See: External Work Policy) has been further updated.

A quality framework for the tender feasibility assessment and bid process has been developed.

An intellectual asset audit has been undertaken.

A strategy and process to support external access to UWS capital equipment in key areas has been developed.

I&C provides detailed quarterly reports on its performance to the University.

Current outcomes and impact

Intellectual Property

The IP review and new framework led to UWS closing down non-productive IP initiatives and rebuilding the UWS IP portfolio during 2009. The IP management framework was recognised with a commendation in the Vice Chancellor’s Annual Awards in 2009.

The University has seen a significant increase in the identification of potential commercialisation projects. The current UWS IP portfolio consists of 12 patent families comprising 43 granted patents and 17 pending patent applications. Processes are established for the identification at early stages of development any potential IP, which is then to be monitored, supported and protected.

Consulting and business opportunities

The outcomes and impact of the University-wide assessment of capacity and links to external business opportunities has resulted in:

• A significant increase in the generation of consulting revenue (June quarter 2009 was 37.5% above same period in 2008).
• 12 tenders were submitted in 2009, several of which were in areas where UWS has not previously sought to secure business. Four of these were successful with three decisions pending. This has secured total revenues of $1.87 million for the University.
• Tenders are being noted for their size, complexity and strength and the mix of the external collaborative partners that were assembled.
• 17 business proposals were accepted by external clients in 2009, generating a gross revenue for the University of $1,219,497. Most of these assignments were conducted within 2009. However, two major assignments will extend into 2010 and 2011.
• Ongoing support for and involvement in the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce, particularly with the establishment of a Chamber news magazine, “Parramatta Business Access”.

Recommendation 3:

AUQA recommends that UWS further develop the business development office and associated University systems to promote income generation from consultancies, commercial research and other external sources.
Income
There has been a steady increase in overall income from consultancy, contract research, royalties and IP sources from $9.21m in 2006 to $10.57m in 2008, and $11.51m in 2009. See the financial outcomes in the UWS Annual Reports.

Consolidation of UWS Consulting & Business Development & next steps

These include:

- A more targeted tender program.
- Detailed market research on business opportunities in South America, which leverage the foundation work of the UWS School of Education in Chile.
- Detailed research into the possible establishment of a UWS Psychology Clinic in the new Parramatta Legal Precinct.
Recommendation 4:

AUQA recommends that UWS develop an effective strategy to increase higher degree research (HDR) enrolments and completions without jeopardising quality, and ensure that all HDR students have appropriate facilities and support regardless of campus location.

Actions Taken

Increasing HDR enrolments
The range of strategies used to increase HDR enrolments and completions since the Cycle 1 audit is integrated into the UWS Research Framework 2009-13 and includes:

• Awarding 40 Honours’ Scholarships in 2008 each worth $5000, with further increases in 2009. This program is starting to provide a pipeline of students to undertake research degrees (see: Honours scholarships).
• An increase in the number of UWS Research Scholarships in order to attract more and higher quality students (see: Research Scholarships), including the Yarramundi Indigenous HDR Scholarship.
• An increase in UWS marketing of research activities in order to attract more international students with overseas scholarships.
• Targeted support for Indigenous research in order to increase Indigenous participation in research degree programs.

For further details see: Future Research Students

Increasing Completions
Actions taken since the cycle 1 AUQA audit to improve completion rates include: a more structured first year program and a greater emphasis on the quality of candidates. There is an expectation that full-time Masters Honours students will complete in 18 months, and full-time PhD candidates in 3 years. This is not to deny any student a full RTS place at either 2 or 4 years full-time equivalent, if needed, but UWS has sought to instil within students and supervisors expectations about the seriousness and currency of their research training endeavours.

Facilities & Support
The objective set in 2008 has been to provide state-of-the-art research facilities in order to attract high ability research students. The UWS Research Student Satisfaction Survey has been used since 2005 to identify priority areas for improvement and these have been addressed by the Research Office, the Colleges and Research Centres. The PREQ is used to benchmark performance and support quality against comparable universities.

The UWS Research Studies Committee has investigated the resources issue and implemented a common process across UWS for accessing candidature funds. There is now a standard form Candidature Project Funds Application Form with a set of guidelines for funding support on the Current Research Student Web site (see: Candidate support and resources).

Principal HDR Supervisors must:
- be a permanent or fixed term employee of UWS;
- hold current registration on the Graduate Supervisor Register; and
- qualify on the UWS Register of Research Activity.

For further details see: Supervision

To maintain consistency of participation in supervision training research supervisors are required to participate in at least one research supervision development forum every three years, although they are encouraged to participate more regularly. The Office of Research Services coordinates a range of resources and programs to support research supervisors in collaboration with the Teaching Development Unit and the Colleges (see: Research supervision development). On-line supervisor modules are being developed for new UWS academic staff and academic staff new to supervision.

Commencing in 2008, UWS has significantly increased internal investment in funding HDR Scholarships, both domestic and international. UWS Colleges provide funding for research students to present work in progress at national and international conferences (up to $2000 per conference). Students are encouraged to achieve at least one refereed publication during their candidature.

UWS has developed an online moderated program for all Commencing Students – Post Graduate Essentials. This has been well received by HDR students and supervisors. A new module focused on career options for UWS postgraduate students has recently been added.
Current outcomes and impact

- In 2008 HDR load rose for the first time since 2000, with a 40% increase in international HDR load in 2008 followed by a further 25% in 2009.
- HDR completions have risen slightly since 2006: from 113 in 2006 to 114 in 2008.
- The UWS HDR completions to load ratio has risen from 0.17 in 2004 to 0.25 in 2008 (compared with a rise of the sector ratio from 0.20 in 2004 to 0.21 in 2008).
- The UWS Research Satisfaction Survey shows rises between 2005-6 and 2007-8 on almost every measure, with overall satisfaction on the most recent survey standing at 4.01/5, which is above the University's high performance criterion of 3.75/5.
- UWS monitors the annual PREQ results to track its performance. PREQ data shows strong performance on the measure of Supervision, as well as the need for continuing focus on improving the Intellectual Climate that HDR students experience (an issue for the entire sector) along with their infrastructure needs. The 2007 survey showed a fall in satisfaction with Thesis Examination and in response, the Research Studies Committee implemented a monitoring and reporting process via the Office of Academic Registrar (OAR).
- The available number of supervisors on the HDR Register has grown from 481 in 2006 to 564 in 2009.
- Success in the ARC Discovery Indigenous program continues to rise.
- The percentage of UWS HDR students publishing has risen from just over 10% in 2002 to 30% in 2008.

For further detail see: Postgraduate Annual Course Reports and UWS Research Student Satisfaction Survey report
Recommendation 5:

AUQA recommends that UWS develop appropriate systems to implement the Indigenous education commitment including redeveloping the resource plan and giving consideration to adding a graduate attribute.

Actions Taken

Staffing, resourcing and support

The Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education (BCIE) has been redeveloped, including:

a. Provision of support facilities and staff for Indigenous students on all campuses;
b. Granting of quasi School status to BCIE by the UWS Education Committee. Governance and quality management structures used by Schools have been put in place as part of this process;
c. Transfer to Badanami of responsibility for the management and delivery of both of the University’s existing away-from-base programs.

UWS has introduced an Indigenous traineeship scheme, established an Indigenous Outreach and recruitment program, and put in place a range of staff roles incorporated in mainstream operational areas – including a Director of Indigenous Employment and Engagement in the Office of Human Resources, two Indigenous marketing and recruitment officers in the Office of Public Affairs, an Indigenous academic in the School of Nursing and an Indigenous Program Officer in the UWS School of Medicine (where 5 commencing student places out of 100 are reserved each year for Indigenous students).

Workshops in the areas of Indigenous education, cultural awareness and communication are now being rolled out for all staff across the University. A number of UWS Indigenous student scholarships exist, including: Start up Grants; Achievement Scholarships and the Yarramundi Scholarships.

An interlocked set of Committees has been established to support action on this important area. They include the UWS Indigenous Advisory Council, a standing council of the University; the Indigenous Employment and Engagement Advisory Board; and the Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy Consultative Committee.

Indigenous Graduate Attribute

The UWS Indigenous Graduate Attribute was approved in 2008 (see: UWS Graduate Attributes) and a KPI on Indigenous participation and retention has been introduced in 2010.

UWS won a $900,000 Diversity and Structural Reform program grant in late 2008 to develop the UWS Indigenous Graduate Attribute. Badanami Centre staff have collaborated with the three UWS Colleges and their respective Schools in establishing Indigenous Graduate Attribute Working Committees. The members have identified core units, common across a number of degrees that would be suitable in which to develop discipline specific Indigenous content. During 2009 an Indigenous Australian Studies major and sub-majors were developed. These are made up from a sequence of ten Indigenous Australian Studies units all of which are being made available in 2010 or 2011.

Badanami academics are involved in teaching as well as developing curriculum across the University, including co-delivering a core health science unit with the School of Biomedical Sciences which has significant Indigenous content; introducing e-learning Indigenous content into a core School of Education unit and in a unit on Indigenous Health in Nursing; providing advice on Indigenous resources relevant to disciplines; and identifying staff professional development needs, including intercultural awareness.

Strategy, Planning & Policy

An Integrated Indigenous Education Strategy 2008-2010 has been developed, endorsed and is being implemented (Indigenous Education Strategy 2008-10). This strategy addresses each of the following: Access & Student Support, Learning & Teaching (including a graduate attribute), Indigenous Research, Engagement & Outreach, Indigenous International Engagement, Cultural Recognition, Recruitment & Communication, Employment & Professional Development and Indigenous Cultural Recognition.

The UWS Indigenous Education Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT) in February 2008 and takes account of the results of national and international benchmarking (Indigenous Education Policy).

From 2009 all UWS School Reviews are to focus specifically on the extent to which each School is meeting the University’s objectives for Indigenous education. These include areas such as: Indigenous student cohorts / access / relevance of curriculum/ Indigenous content in the curriculum.
UWS has implemented a Key Performance Indicator for Indigenous student participation as part of its institutional priorities. Its commitment is also seen in a range of enabling policies and plans including the UWS Reconciliation Statement, the Indigenous Employment focus in the Our People 2015 plan and in its Community Engagement initiatives.

Oversight for the Indigenous Education Strategy is given by the UWS Indigenous Advisory Council whose terms of reference were endorsed by the UWS Board of Trustees in February 2008 and which has strong Indigenous representation (Indigenous Advisory Council Terms of Reference).

Capacity & aspiration building

UWS has introduced an Indigenous Outreach and School Mentoring Program (Indigenous students).

The ‘Our People 2015’ staffing strategy includes an “Indigenous Employment and Engagement” project. This project is developing programs to cover both Indigenous education and the employment opportunities that can follow. Recruitment of high profile staff is complete in some key areas and underway in others.

In late 2007, UWS implemented its inaugural Indigenous Student Satisfaction Survey (Indigenous Student Satisfaction Survey). The findings of the survey have been used to identify further improvement priorities for action by the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education. At the same time, a university-wide Indigenous Education Strategy Forum was held to test and identify how best to implement the University’s key plans for the area.

Curriculum initiatives

- A new model for away-from-base programs has been delivered using the B.Ed. as the pilot. This new approach has achieved 73% retention for the current first year intake.
- The existing B Comm Welfare (AREP) has been taught out by Badanami and a new Diploma and Degree developed.
- The Badanami Alternative Entry Program was introduced in 2008. The majority of Indigenous enrolments at UWS are via this program.
- Badanami is currently working with the UWS College on the development of enabling programs for Indigenous Students with pathways into UWS degrees. UWS College has received $700,000 from the Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund (DSAF) for this purpose.

Benchmarking

The overall strategy developed in response to Recommendation 5 has been benchmarked and endorsed by those universities in Canada and Australia who are performing successfully in the area.

An additional benchmarking project is being formulated with Charles Darwin University to identify the optimum ways to engage Indigenous students in productive learning using the Campus Edition of Blackboard. This project has received significant Federal Government Funding. The Strategy has since been incorporated into the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education’s Operational Plan 2008-2010 and related staffing needs identified and implemented.

Current outcomes and impact

The following outcomes have been achieved:

Indigenous student participation, retention & satisfaction

The number of ATSI enrolments at UWS has grown from 235 in 2005 to 331 in 2009, with a parallel growth in participation rate from 0.84% in 2005 to 1.08% in 2009 of domestic student enrolments. The retention ratio for ATSI vs non ATSI students has grown from 0.88 in 2005 to 0.97 in 2009 compared with the sector which has remained stable at between 0.78 in 2005 and 0.79 in 2008. The success ratio for ATSI students vs non ATSI students at UWS has grown from 0.90 in 2006 to 0.95 in 2008 and was well above the sector success ratio of 0.77 in 2006 and 0.79 in 2008.

More than 60% of all commencing UWS students now come in via the Badanami Alternative Entry Program.

In 2009 the B.Ed AREP program achieved 73% retention for the first year intake, up from 63% in the previous year.

Badanami Indigenous Education units in Semester 1, 2009 attracted a mean overall satisfaction rating of 4.05 compared with a UWS average of 3.91.

More than 60% of all commencing UWS students now come in via the Badanami Alternative Entry Program.

In 2009 the B.Ed AREP program achieved 73% retention for the first year intake, up from 63% in the previous year.

Badanami Indigenous Education units in Semester 1, 2009 attracted a mean overall satisfaction rating of 4.05 compared with a UWS average of 3.91.

The Indigenous School mentoring program was implemented with three schools in 2009 (16 students) and has been expanded to six schools in 2010 (35 students). Indigenous school students are being mentored from year 9 through year 12. A UWS Indigenous Mentoring Program with primary school students is being undertaken in parallel with the secondary school program.
At the same time Badanami is now working with UWS College on the development of enabling programs for Indigenous Students. UWS College has received $700K from the DSAF for this purpose.

Indigenous capacity building and human resources

• Indigenous representation now exists on all relevant UWS committees.
• The UWS Indigenous traineeship pilot program has received a commendation from DEEWR. It commenced in 2008 involving 14 trainees and a further 15 in 2009. Every trainee has completed their work placement program and TAFE certificate III course (compared with a normal completion rate of 40%); and each trainee has successfully moved on to undertaking a Certificate IV VET or university course or into permanent employment.
• The number of Indigenous staff at UWS has risen from 15 in 2007 to 27 in 2009, a 55% increase.

Implementing the Indigenous Attribute

UWS is now well advanced in implementing the Indigenous Graduate Attribute with Badanami currently working with seven University Schools to implement it. A range of units have been developed (2 in Nursing, 2 in Psychology, 4 in Law, 2 in Nature Conservation, 1 in Biomedical Sciences and 1 in Education). The new Diploma and Bachelor's Degree in Community and Social Development (Block Model), along with majors and submajors will be introduced in a staged way over 2010 and 2011,
Actions taken

Strategic focus
The UWS Engagement Strategy 2010-13 focuses specifically on:
• areas of urgent importance to Greater Western Sydney;
• educational attainment and aspiration building in our schools;
• cultural understanding;
• environmental sustainability, and
• economic development especially for small and medium enterprises.

Leadership, Coordination and Support
Since 2007, UWS has advanced its university-wide engagement agenda through the following actions:

• A University-wide Engagement Strategy Committee, which guided the development of an Engagement Strategic Plan, was approved by the Executive in September 2007.
• Existing engagement-related units and positions were consolidated into a portfolio led by a Pro Vice-Chancellor Engagement (PVC-E) (appointed May 2007), charged with a “whole of university” mission to facilitate engagement strategies and programs.
• The engagement portfolio has been expanded. It now includes the PVC-Engagement, Schools Engagement, UWS Engagement, Careers and Cooperative Education, the UWS Art Collection and four facilitator positions and managers aligned directly with the strategic focus for the portfolio.
• The College of Business has appointed an Associate Dean – Engagement, and the Executive Deans of the other two Colleges take leadership responsibilities for engagement.
• In 2008 a full-time Manager for Schools Engagement and an assistant were appointed.
• In terms of support:
  o Staff training and professional development programs on effective approaches to engaged teaching and research have been delivered.
  o The PVCs Research, Learning and Teaching, and Engagement have worked with the Our People 2015 Project team to revise promotion guidelines to give focus to engaged teaching, research, and community service activities in all promotion categories and standards.

For further details see: UWS Engagement portfolio

Tracking and Improvement
To track and improve the institution-wide strategy UWS has created a nationally endorsed online tool for collecting and tracking data called TICE (Tracking and Improving Community Engagement). This online tool captures project level data on activity, partnerships, geographic and program focus, impacts, outcomes, and funding details. TICE was developed by a partnership between the Office of Planning & Quality, the Office of University Engagement and the UWS Information Technology Services team. The TICE site design was completed in 2008. TICE I was launched in 2009. TICE II (which will capture feedback and impact data from external partners) is in progress for implementation during 2010.

Benchmarking for Improvement
UWS is actively engaged in the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (http://aucea.com.au/) which it helped create. The University has used this involvement, along with targeted benchmarking with universities like Griffith and active networks in the U.S., to benchmark and refine its whole-of-university strategy.

Current outcomes and impact
The integrated approach adopted by UWS in this area has resulted in it being chosen as a key case study in an international investigation of good practice in university engagement initiated by the Talloires Network and led by the UK’s Sir David Watson. The outcomes will be a book and website to be launched later in 2010. Sir David referred to UWS as a ‘University without Walls’ in his November 2009 evaluative report on the UWS engagement strategy.

He noted how all of the University’s key research centres are engaging with key issues facing rapidly developing peri-urban areas like Greater Western Sydney and identified the following as being standout initiatives:

• The Schools Engagement Strategic Plan (which has a coordinated focus on a region of more than 900 schools and is guided by a Schools Engagement Reference Group, composed of external stakeholders and convened quarterly);
• The UWS Refugee Action Support program (currently involving 85 Master of Teaching Students mentoring 200 refugee school students);
• The University’s standing University Indigenous Advisory Council and an Indigenous Engagement and Employment Advisory Board;

Affirmation 6:
AUQA affirms that in keeping with the 2005 internal review, UWS redevelop a whole-of-university community engagement strategy and align associated University systems to ensure it is implemented across the University.
The Whitlam Institute, which offers programmes on contemporary social issues, particularly involving young people, and is named after the reforming Prime Minister whose electorate was in the region;

SMExcellence, a free interactive learning platform, designed and maintained by students and staff, that sets out to improve the business skills of the region’s myriad small business owners and managers, estimated to be in excess of 240,000;

UWSCollege, a not-for-profit, University-owned company that provides academic pathways into the University for students not fully prepared for first year study and for international students who need to gain appropriate English language and study skills, as well as specific vocational courses and an Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

The University-wide strategy has also been endorsed nationally and is to be featured as an example of good practice in a forthcoming issue of the U.S. Journal of Metropolitan Universities.

In late 2009 TICE was demonstrated to DEEWR as a tool with potential national application. In 2010, UWS will begin marketing TICE to other universities in Australia and internationally.

The revised academic staff promotion guidelines were implemented successfully in the 2009 promotions process (See: Promotions policy; Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, Professor).

Since 2007, the PVC-E has conducted more than 30 workshops and training events across the university on engaged learning and research practices, and served as mentor to academic staff seeking to develop an engaged research agenda. In 2008-09 UWS hosted five international visiting scholar workshops on additional aspects of engaged teaching, community-based research, community development, and partnerships.
INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Recommendation 6:

AUQA recommends that UWS reconsider the approach to offering transnational UWS award programs to ensure that the UWS reputation is strong and that quality is assured in practice.

Actions taken

UWS has not entered into any new transnational award programs since its AUQA audit in October 2006, with only one continuing program in Nursing and Public Health at the Hong Kong Baptist University.

UWS has implemented an oversight committee, the International Committee (IC), to ensure that the UWS reputation and quality assurance is strong.

The IC reports to the UWS Executive Committee. The Terms of Reference are:

1. Monitor all offshore activities of the University in order to ensure that the appropriate quality controls are in place;
2. Provide regular reports of all offshore activities on a country-by-country basis;
3. Provide advice on possible future activities and assess all formal proposals to engage in offshore activities;
4. Ensure that appropriate processes and procedures are implemented for all existing offshore programs.

UWS continues to apply the key QA checkpoints endorsed in its Cycle 1 audit to assure the quality of its offshore programs (UWS Offshore QA Guidelines). UWS offshore activity must be deliberate, planned, sustainable and consistent with the broader strategic objectives of the university. The critical element is to work with a reliable partner who shares our academic values and our emphasis on providing a quality student experience. It is important to make unhurried decisions and only to enter into agreements after proper due diligence. The University will not enter into a potential partnership if it cannot pass the due diligence tests.

The approach to building all UWS offshore activities has been reviewed and sharpened. A protocol (Offshore programs) has been developed for approving all types of offshore activities. All proposals are to be tested against this protocol.

In August 2009 the first articulated UWS Mobility Framework for the promotion of outgoing exchange as a strategic priority was endorsed. In addition, a number of new scholarships have been provided by the UWS Foundation to support UWS students taking a period of their study at an overseas partner.

Current outcomes and impact

During 2009 there was a focus on a number of significant institutional relationships. As examples:

- the relationship with the University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City and the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training is particularly strong.

Fifteen early career academics have undertaken a preliminary program in Vietnam including research preparation and additional English language studies with the first cohort completing their preparation program in 2009 and enrolling in the DBA at UWS in March 2010. Negotiations have commenced for a student articulation pathway for UEH students into the UWS Master of Business and Commerce (MBC) to be offered by UEH with the students completing the remainder of the MBC in Sydney.

Discussions of articulation into the UWS Bachelor of Business and Commerce are proceeding. It is also anticipated that possible future exchanges will be developed for UWS undergraduate and postgraduate students to study at UEH. As in all such projects the UWS Articulation, Credit and Advanced Standing policies apply (VET/UWS Articulation and pathways; Academic Credit/Advance Standing).

- Relationships with universities in Indonesia developed strongly in 2009. There were three delegation visits between Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and UWS in 2009 and an Academic Cooperation Agreement was signed in February to develop a joint undergraduate program in biomedical and health sciences. As a result of the cooperation there are three UGM nursing academics enrolling in a PhD at UWS in 2010. The relationship with the State Islamic University (UIN) in Jakarta has also broadened in 2009. Initially UWS developed broad agreements with the Faculty of Business but in December the University hosted a visit from the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at UIN. It is anticipated that these meetings will lead to the exchange of staff and students and potential research collaboration in the social science areas.(for further information see: Exchange students; Exchange partner universities)
• Agreements have been reached with the China Scholarship Council, Ningbo Education Bureau and Shanghai Jiao-tong University for research higher degree students to enrol at UWS.

• UWS has actively engaged in expanding its relationships in the Middle East. The number of students coming to Australia to study from the Middle East has increased dramatically over the past 3 years. This is largely due to government scholarships being provided in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Iraq and UAE. A senior UWS delegation visited the Middle East in April 2009 and established a priority list of universities with whom UWS can establish strong collaboration leading to joint academic and research programs and onshore international students. UWS has worked closely with the Consular staff to ensure that Middle Eastern students are integrated into UWS and that the maximum benefit is derived from the scholarship programs. As a result of our strong relationship with the Kuwait Cultural Attaché, 23 Kuwait scholarship students will enter UWS in 2010.

• The above agreements have resulted in a growth of 40% since 2007 in overseas HDR student numbers.

• The number of UWS students going on an international full semester exchange program has grown from 60 in 2008 to 80 in 2009 (for further information see: UWS students studying internationally).
Actions taken

As noted in the interim report to AUQA the UWS Our People 2015 initiative has adopted an integrated approach to addressing the challenges of capacity building, staff retention and succession planning. It brings together nine interlocked action areas:

1. Recruitment and Selection
2. Indigenous Employment and engagement
3. Climate, culture and employer branding
4. Workforce planning and alignment
5. Employee retention and relationships
6. Performance and career development
7. Reward and recognition
8. Academic Agenda, and promotion
9. Organisational leadership

See: Our People Final Strategy

Of particular relevance to Affirmation 7 is the attention being given to strategy Four : Workforce Alignment and Mapping. The specific focus of this strategy is:

To enable workforce planning and forecasting by mapping and aligning the academic and general staff workforce profile to the academic program and core activities of UWS, and to project future gaps in skills and expertise. This mapping exercise will provide a robust gap analysis of current and required staffing profiles for academic and research programs within the Colleges, Schools and Research Centres to identify staffing risks and enable UWS to target recruitment and retention strategies for talented teaching staff and researchers, and for staff approaching retirement. (Our People 2015, Strategy 4, pg 7).

The Board of Trustees Strategic Priorities for 2015 give focus to increasing the number and quality of academic staff and their alignment to the UWS priorities.

UWS Research Lecturerships Scheme

One example of how this strategy is being implemented is the UWS Research Lecturerships scheme. To date UWS has successfully recruited 24 young academic staff specifically engaged in one of our key research areas, as identified in the Making the Difference plan. A further 12 are to be recruited over the next year. This scheme provides a one third teaching load for 3 years, seed money for research in one of our key areas and active mentoring from a senior UWS researcher in the area concerned. The College of Health and Science is currently implementing a parallel strategic lectureship scheme which has concentrated specifically on filling expertise gaps in key areas for development in that College. Under this scheme five new academics were recruited in 2009.

Promotions Policy alignment

The UWS Promotions Policy gives specific focus to performance in key areas of research concentration and other key UWS priorities. (See: Promotions Policy Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, Professor).

Our People 2015 Projects

To support this strategy, and to optimise both gaining and retaining the right staff:

• a sophisticated eRecruitment system has been implemented;
• staff induction and transition programs have been reviewed and enhanced;
• an Indigenous staff recruitment and development program has been implemented;
• a Succession Management module has been included in the University's Cornerstone system;
• a wide range of rewards and recognition schemes have been implemented to optimise staff retention including:
  o VCs Development scholarships;
  o a doubling of the UWS Staff Education Allowance;
  o reduced programs for staff studying at the post graduate level;
  o the introduction of a “Staff Benefits” page;
  o new categories in the VCs Excellence Awards which align with key directions;
  o a FlexiYear scheme for general staff; and an internal Job Exchange Program.
• In 2009 the DVC (Corporate Services) and the PVC (Quality) held campus forums aimed at identifying key ways to enhance the culture and climate of UWS the key outcomes of which are currently being actioned (see: Culture Climate program and achievements).

Leadership succession & development

To support the implementation of the Leadership component of the UWS Our People 2015 Project an interlocked set of initiatives has been implemented. They include:

• Senior Staff forums and InVision leadership programs for senior staff;
• Senior Staff undertaking Company Directors Courses;

Affirmation 7:

AUQA affirms the attention UWS is giving to aligning human resources with strategic priorities for its future through projects such as Our People 2015.
• Expansion of the UWS Senior Staff - 360° feedback program;
• Appointment of "coaches" for senior staff;
• Leadership and Emerging Leadership programs;
• Retaining leading staff as adjuncts, emeritus professors or Board of Trustees Members; and
• Facilitated forums on a regular basis for Associate Heads of Schools; Heads of Program; School Managers.

The Academic Lifestyle Cycle project is an additional component to the UWS Our People 2015 staffing strategy and is funded by DEEWR. Work on the components that make up this project commenced in March 2010. They include:
• Hosting an academic career planning conference;
• Developing an early career academic program;
• Implementing an early-career academic mentoring program;
• Further developing the academic agenda – long term planning strategy;
• Developing and establishing a mid-career academic program;
• Benchmarking reward and recognition incentives for academic staff;
• Building upon current transitioning to retirement strategies in place;
  o Evaluating industry career transitioning programs;
  o Developing e-resource for academics;
  o Establishing avenues for academic connections post retirement;
  o Reviewing adjunct appointment policy;
  o Investigating the academic diaspora.

Current outcomes and impact

Successful Funding
In September 2007, UWS was successful in its application for a DEEWR Workplace Productivity Program (WPP) grant, receiving $2,927,000 to enable implementation of the Our People 2015 strategy. In December 2009, DEEWR awarded UWS a further $595,211 as a WPP additional grant to augment the Our People 2015 strategy and to specifically map the “Lifecycle of the Academic”. The Indigenous Traineeship Program has been praised by DEEWR and has also gained further funding.

Student satisfaction with staff quality
Over the initial period in which the Our People 2015 strategy has been implemented student satisfaction with the quality of staff has improved on a range of measures. For example, in the UWS Student Satisfaction Survey the mean rating for Item 8 (The course I am taking is conducted by staff who are good teachers) has risen from 3.49 in 2007 to 3.72 in 2009.

Building capacity in key priority areas for research
The research lectureships’ initiative has been successfully implemented. There has been a 29% increase in academic staff positions since 2008 and a 14.6% increase since the beginning of 2009.

IT-enabled staff recruitment and performance support
The UWS e-recruitment system has seen the successful management of over 20,000 applications. UWS MyCareer Online is now in the early stages of implementation.

Indigenous staff
The number of UWS Indigenous staff has increased to 1.6% and is now above the percentage of Indigenous residents in Greater Western Sydney. An innovative brokering model has been accepted by DEEWR for employment of Indigenous candidates through UWS to external organisations.

Improving the UWS age profile
Staffing statistics over the past 4 years show a slow but definite trend towards improving the age profile in academia at UWS.

Occupational Health & Safety Performance
UWS is recognised as the lead site in automating OH&S modules through the ALESCO system, and has hosted a number of delegations from universities and government agencies to review our practice.

IT System Support
UWS is currently developing an interface between its COGNOS data warehouse and Alesco (HR Information System), as part of the Business Intelligence initiative. This will allow sophisticated analysis and reporting on the UWS academic staff profile and changes to the demographics over time for succession management.

Alignment with MTD
Alignment between the Our People 2015 initiative and the UWS Making the Difference plan is seen in the MTD Plan’s inclusion under the ‘Building Organisational and Financial Strength’ strategy of specific attention to attracting, retaining, recognising and rewarding high quality staff.
Actions taken

With a view to aligning workloads to strategic priorities, a working party comprised of the PVC Engagement, PVC Research, PVC Learning and Teaching, DVC Academic & Enterprise and Human Resources staff is meeting regularly as part of the academic staff profile component of the Our People 2015 project.

The UWS workload regulation system has been subject to negotiation at each round of enterprise bargaining, with outcomes reflected in the resulting enterprise agreements and enhanced through university policies.

The outcomes of the workload provisions are widely disseminated and implemented by unit managers, Executive Deans and Human Resources staff, with material available on the website for staff, included in staff professional development and integrated into relevant Human Resource systems.

Current outcomes and impact

The General Staff Agreements 2006-8 and the more recent 2009-2012 Agreement, include workload regulation through the hours of work, overtime and flexitime provisions (see UWS Collective Agreements).

The Academic Staff Agreement 2006-8 includes a workload clause and is currently subject to negotiation with a significantly revised workload regime being negotiated.

Following the conclusion of the 2006 Academic Agreement negotiations, the University approved an Academic Workloads Principles Policy. The policy was published in the web accessible policy system – Policy DDS – on 28 February 2007 and took effect from that date (Academic Workload Principles).

In accordance with the Academic Staff Agreement clause 39, the Chairs of the College Workload Committees formulated workload principles used in the development of College Workload Policies. The aim was to simplify the calculation of hours for academic workloads, while achieving fairness and consistency across UWS and alignment with strategic priorities.

As a university-wide mechanism for calculating hours for the components of an academic workload, the principles are based on a “deduction” model, beginning with a teaching load of 800 hours per semester or 1600 hours per annum, with 125 hours for activities not captured under the core categories, making up the total of 1725 hours per annum; and then deducting from the teaching hours allocations of time for other activities.

For the future 2009-12 Agreement, a forum of senior staff and Executive members discussed and agreed to the approach and underpinning framework for workload allocation and management. The outcomes of this forum inform developments relating to consistency in academic staff engagement with the University and within their workload allocation. Further consultations with staff and their representatives are ongoing in semester one, 2010.

The Annual Academic Performance Planning and Review system (see below) gives specific attention to aligning performance development plans with the priorities identified in the Making the Difference 2010-15 plan. Similarly promotion criteria have, as already been noted, been adjusted to give greater focus to the University’s engaged learning and research priorities.

Affirmation 8:

AUQA affirms the establishment of a university workload system to ensure consistent application and alignment with University strategic priorities.
Recommendation 7:
AUQA recommends that UWS develop and implement for all staff a more rigorous system of performance review and evaluation.

Actions taken

A more rigorous system of performance review and evaluation for all staff engaged on a fixed-term contract of 12 months or more has been continuously applied and refined since 2006. It now includes:

- A performance management framework which encompasses many different aspects of individual and group performance which are linked to the University’s Staff Agreements and which includes Performance Planning and Career Development schemes, Workload Agreements, Probation, Higher Duties Allowance, Annual Increments, Unsatisfactory Performance, and Misconduct.

- Two performance planning schemes both agreed as part of the relevant UWS Staff Agreement: Performance, Planning and Review (APPR) for academic staff and Performance Planning and Career Development for general staff.

- Participation in the relevant scheme is mandatory for continuing staff and those on contracts of 12 months or more. The schemes are outlined in the relevant Staff Agreements.

- Clear policy and guidelines for each area, along with training of all supervisors and staff on how to apply them are provided. See Academic Staff Performance, Planning & Review and General Staff Career Development and Planning.

General Staff
Performance review and evaluation formed part of Clause 15, Career Planning and Development, of the UWS General Staff Collective Agreement 2006-2008 and clause 41 of the more recent UWS General Staff Collective Agreement 2009-12. This constitutes an essential component of the UWS contract of employment (Current General Staff Agreement).

The process provides for annual discussions between an employee and their supervisor/reviewer with respect to the planning and review of current and future work activities. The process is also designed to enable the University to monitor and support the ongoing professional development of individual employees, identify where there is a need for support and where there may be problems requiring resolution.

The purpose of the Annual Planning and Career Development program is to provide a structure to help plan, manage, evaluate and develop individual performance. The program is designed specifically to assist an individual’s performance and career development and to improve the organisation’s performance through:

- joint clarification of work related goals and objectives and confirmation of their alignment with the MTD strategies;
- providing a structure for individual performance planning;
- two-way, regular, open and constructive feedback on performance;
- recognition of achievements and acknowledgment of outstanding performance;
- facilitating the effective management of probation;
- initial identification of possible unsatisfactory performance;
- informing decisions for the approval of incremental advancement;
- support, encouragement and action on professional and personal career development plans.

The system is supported by comprehensive information and resources on the website for staff and managers and through regular staff and manager training.

The 2009 clause provides for the use of a standard planning and career development document and the development of the process by an Implementation Committee.

Where there are perceived difficulties with performance, the process is clearly outlined in clauses 50-52 of the Agreement with unsatisfactory conduct, unsatisfactory performance and misconduct procedures.

Academic Staff
The current UWS Academic Staff Agreement 2006-8 (Current Academic Staff Agreement) includes an Academic Performance Planning and Review process which requires a meeting at least annually between each academic and their supervisor to discuss the employee’s past performance and future development plans.

The system:

a. covers all aspects of an employee’s workload agreement;

b. provides an employee with an opportunity to document and discuss their achievements and identify any factors that may facilitate their development;

c. assists an employee to be fully aware of their responsibilities and duties and the effect that these have on the University’s operations;

d. provides a basis for further professional development of the employee;
e. provides positive feedback and encouragement on performance where appropriate and provide guidance and feedback to an employee where performance is assessed as requiring improvement.

The Agreement also provides for all employees to undertake an annual evaluation of their teaching in the units in which they currently deliver and of any research supervision in which they are involved, with the results of these evaluations to be made available to their supervisor at the time of the Academic Performance Planning and Review meeting.

The system is also linked to the probation, promotion and unsatisfactory performance processes. Where there are perceived difficulties with performance, the process is clearly outlined in clauses 50-52 of the Agreement with unsatisfactory conduct, unsatisfactory performance and misconduct procedures.

The new Academic Staff Agreement 2010 is close to finalisation and includes a more comprehensive performance management system.

Training for Performance Review & Evaluation
All staff are required to attend training in Performance Planning and Review.

UWS commenced implementation of the Cornerstone Learning and Performance Development System in 2009, launching it as “MyCareer Online” (MyCareer Online).

MyCareer Online is a secure, flexible, staff-only online system accessed through the staff web “kiosk” Staff Online. It assists staff learning and performance development, enables staff to concurrently manage resume and career development priorities, helps ensure probation monitoring is improvement focused and helps staff ensure that their development focus aligns with the strategic priorities for the University. This latter function will be introduced in the latter part of 2010.

Current outcomes and impact

A 360 degree feedback program for 35 Heads of School and Directors was implemented in 2008, building on the system already used with members of the Executive since 2007;

An executive coaching and mentoring program has been put in place for senior staff, along with a Continuing Professional Development framework.

Highlights from the early implementation of the MyCareer Online system include:
• Pilot groups of General Staff started using the system in December 2009 to develop performance and development plans;
• Pilot Academic Staff users commenced using the system mid February;
• Training on how to use the system for all new staff, along with probation planning, are now being completed using the system. Training has also included specific assistance to Indigenous staff;
• Staff members have used MyCareer Online since January 2010 for searching, registering for and recording completions of classroom and online learning;
• First reviews will be undertaken using MyCareer Online mid 2010;
• Supervisors and HR staff are able to manage completions and compliance by using automatic management reports and information;
• 360 Reviews are presently undertaken by Executive and Senior Staff; it is expected MyCareer Online will be used for this purpose in 2011.

Preliminary evaluations indicate a positive response to the fact that the system does not encourage a ‘templated’ response but rather one which is custom tailored to the performance, ambitions and needs of the individual staff member.

Next steps

At the completion of the current collective bargaining round the University will make MyCareer Online available to sessional academic staff to assist their performance and development. The UWS capability framework will also be incorporated into the system which will allow staff to self-assess against them. At the same time the 360 Review system for the Executive and Senior Staff will use MyCareer Online from 2011.
An integrated strategy has been implemented to improve student satisfaction with student administrative services since the cycle 1 AUQA audit. Key elements of this strategy are listed below.

**MySR and associated systems**
The UWS online My Student Record (MySR) system has been subject to continuous quality monitoring and improvement since 2006. In terms of feedback:
- All student feedback survey results for the area have been carefully monitored;
- Reports from the UWS Complaints Handling System have been used to identify areas where process issues need to be addressed; and
- Student focus groups have been conducted on several campuses to ask students to identify what services they use, their level of satisfaction, areas for improvement, what services they need and how they would like those services delivered.

- In terms of oversight, a new cross functional committee has been established to consider MySR issues and enhancements and ensure best practice for self-serve functionality;
- In terms of acting on the feedback received, enrolment-related services have been upgraded through enhanced functionality in MySR and targeted assistance to students in using it has been provided through:
  - Providing hands-on assistance with on-line enrolment in supported computer labs;
  - Academic Advising sessions being scheduled prior to semester and continued during semester via the Student Centres now known as student-central. student-central staff also provide direct assistance to students encountering problems using MySR (both face to face and via phone and email). The new student-central facilities allow for students to use computers in the centres and obtain immediate assistance;
  - Reviewing all web-page content and restructuring the website for commencing and current students for the start year 2010;
  - Introducing additional targeted email communications with students about enrolment related matters;
  - Revising publications for new students for use in conjunction with new website.
- Introducing an on-line Statement of Account that reflects the individual student’s enrolment and HECS/fees owing promptly after any changes to enrolment are made;
- The MySR Helpline has been continued and in conjunction with the Enrolments and Student Finance enquiry line allows for management of basic enquiries and case management of more substantial issues;
- Use of the WebCC telephony tool for continual monitoring of call volume and type, enabling diversion of resources to meet demand and earlier identification of issues.

**Client Service**
- Online applications for non-award, honours and research students are now in place and in development for course transfers.
- Enhancements to the online handbook for Course/Unit information have been instituted.
- Online forms (smart forms) enabling online submission and processing of student requests are now in place for rule waivers and review of grades and will continue to be developed for other processes, with development of advanced standing already underway.
- A major wide-ranging review of student centres, the services they should deliver and how they should be delivered to improve client service was completed on schedule in December 2007, with the implementation plan endorsed by Executive in April 2008 and implemented in 2009. This process included external benchmarking with key partners like Griffith University. Its key features include:
  - The adoption of a student centric model;
  - Use of partnerships at the local level;
  - Repositioning of student service points to cover a wider range of provision and naming them “student-central ”;
  - Integrated use of MySR to help students self-inform effectively;
  - A single point of virtual (phone/email) contact;
  - Use of a wide range of automated online systems to enable student self-management
  - Application of the PIRI cycle and clear performance indicators.

The new Parramatta Student Precinct is a case study of how these principles are being rolled out across all UWS campuses.

**Affirmation 9:**
AUQA affirms that UWS continue to monitor its indicators of student satisfaction with student administration services, and consider ways to increase access to core enrolment-related services and make further improvements to client service.
• Sharepoint has been introduced as an intranet tool to enable the student enquiry and information team to assist staff in advising students.

• Funding in 2010 has been allocated for the implementation of a Customer Response Management system, including a knowledge-based functionality, that will enable an enhanced level of service for students.

• Plain English training for all Student Administration staff and development of a style guide to ensure better communication has been initiated.

• An online, integrated Course/Unit approval system (CAPS) is currently being piloted.

• A new student email system which will also provide an enhanced level of service & functionality is to be implemented in 2010.

• All OAR areas have communication plans using email, alerts, web, posters, brochures and text messaging. Social networking media like Facebook and Twitter are also being increasingly used and I-phone applications are being developed. The new OAR website allows access for StudentCentral and Schools/Colleges to emails sent to students by Student Administration business units and will be expanded to other communications.

• A higher profile OAR Communications Unit has been established.

• UWS students have been given access to review and comment on relevant policies like the UWS Student Code of Conduct.

Current outcomes and impact

Every item concerned with student administration in the UWS Student Satisfaction Survey listed in the table below has seen a rise in performance in 2009-10 compared with the results on the SSS in 2006-7. Of particular significance are the rises in items 36, 40 and 41 and the very high performance rating of 4.31/5 for item 33 (the second highest rated item on performance of the 83 surveyed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>The “Current Students” home page on the UWS website is easy to find</td>
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<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Application procedures for entry are straightforward</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Information about enrolment procedures is clear and accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Enrolling and re-enrolling on-line is quick and convenient</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Online systems such as MySR and online forms have made student administration easier</td>
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<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Information about exams and exam timetables is clear and easily accessible</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Current and accurate information on my HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP liability or fees is provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Accurate information about courses is easily obtainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Problems with administrative matters are effectively resolved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Recommendation 8:**

**AUQA recommends that UWS develop a more robust strategic approach to the governance of information technology (IT) services across the University and build a stronger client service ethos among those responsible for IT service planning and delivery**

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**Actions Taken**

**IT Strategic Plan**

To strengthen IT governance across the University an IT Strategic Plan was finalised in mid-2008 after extensive consultation across UWS (IT Strategic Plan).

The IT Strategic Plan includes 19 broad IT strategy areas aligned to the overall UWS MTD strategy.

Direct support for the new model is delivered through the Information Technology Services (ITS) unit which underwent a significant organisational restructure in 2009. Amongst the new functions identified in the revised ITS structure is an IT Project Management Office which will oversee management of the project portfolio and report back to the IT Management Committee.

A review of the IT Strategic Plan will occur in 2011.

**Governance**

Development of the IT Strategic plan was overseen by an IT Strategy Committee, chaired by a member of the UWS Board of Trustees, with external representation from senior IT staff in large HE sector organisations.

An IT Management Committee, chaired by the DVC (Academic & Enterprise) was established to oversee the implementation of this plan through a project prioritisation framework which is aligned to UWS budget and management processes.

**Client Service**

To address the Cycle 1 recommendation concerning the development of a stronger client service ethos ITS “relationship managers” were appointed in 2009. Action has been taken to foster systematic, two-way communication and to break down the internal “silos” which had inhibited internal linkages and led to a degree of confusion amongst clients.

Senior IT managers (appointments made in late 2009) will now assume a key role in client liaison at a senior level (Executive Deans, Heads of Schools) with campus-based managers responsible for day-to-day client liaison. This is a major implementation activity for ITS in 2010.

Over the last three years, the University has worked to improve its client service focus in ITS. An expanded range of web-based systems has been presented to the client community to improve access to information resources. Examples include online enrolments, MySR (providing students with direct online access to enrolment data), automated lecture recording retrievable by students as podcasts and videoconferencing upgrades.

ITS has also initiated a client communications plan involving the University’s Internal Communications Unit. Amongst the initiatives coming out of this plan in 2010 are:

- A redesign of the ITS web site;
- Implementation of a uniform for campus support staff;
- Standard documentation sets of key IT messages provided to all IT staff;
- Further development of the IT Services Catalogue.

**Current outcomes and impact**

An increase in staff satisfaction with ITS services was seen in the 2008 UWS Staff Services Survey compared with 2005. Some key indicators included:

- Increased satisfaction with Help Desk Services (Importance rank moving from 16 to 9; mean satisfaction increase 3.85 to 3.92 in a scale of 0-5),
- Campus Support Services (Importance ranking from 16 to 6; mean satisfaction increase 3.56 to 3.78);
- IT Procurement (Importance rank 46 to 30; mean satisfaction 3.47 to 3.56),
- Some minor falls in satisfaction were seen with Network Services and Telephone Services although the mean satisfaction ratings remained high (3.56 and 4.04 respectively).

In terms of student satisfaction the 2009-10 UWS Student Satisfaction Survey shows a similar pattern, with the importance ratings for all of the following items being above 4.5/5 and the performance ratings increasing:

- Item 62: The quality of UWS computing equipment performance rating up from 3.67 in 2006-7 to 3.89 in 2009-10
- Item 63: The quality of software from 3.69 in 2006-7 to 3.85 in 2009-10
- Item 64: IT help and support up from 3.44 in 2006-7 to 3.71 in 2009-10.

For full details of the results on these and other UWS Surveys see Surveys at UWS.